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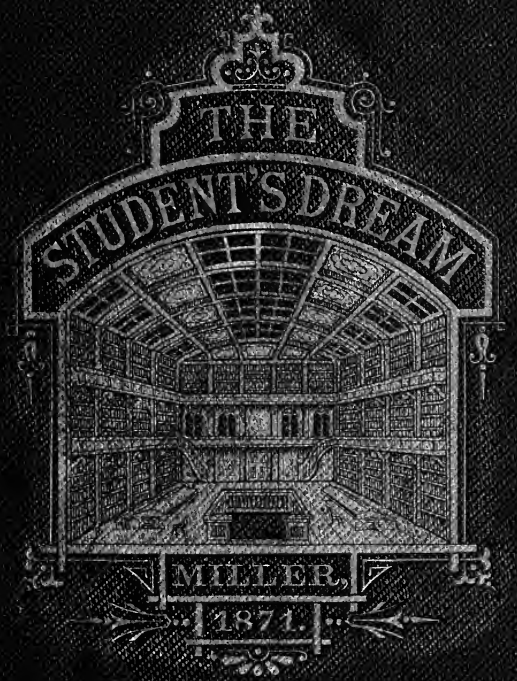

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THE

STUDENT'S DREAM

AND OTHER POEMS.

BY

HOWARD MILLER.

The Poet's thoughts in verse are set
As jewels in an amulet,
And give and get the music won
Like Memnon smitten by the sun.

LOUISVILLE:
JOHN P. MORTON AND COMPANY.
1871.

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Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1871,

By HOWARD MILLER,

In the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

Electrotyped by
Robert Rowell,
Louisville, Ky.

To My Wife.

Medora, gentle lady of my heart,
Accept this unpretentious token
As pledge of love no language can impart,
However eloquently spoken.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
The Student's Dream,	7
The Spire-builders,	14
The Unattainable,	19
Saul,	23
Equality,	31
The Ballad of Sergeant Bates,	38
A Real Dream,	44
Boone to the Indians of Kentucky,	47
The Pioneer's Monologue,	50
May,	56
Kentucky to President Johnson,	57
On the Heights at Noon,	60
To One in Heaven,	64
To the Æronaut and his Craft,	66
On Reading "The Poets and Poetry of the West,"	68
Artists,	73
The Eagle's Vision,	74
Aspiration,	79
The Autumn Forest,	80
The Snow,	83
Clover Hill Eighty Years Ago,	85
My Grandfather's Homestead,	87
The Two Eagles,	92
Visions of Ambition,	95

PAGE.

THE WARNING, ... 105
SUNSHINE, ... 109
A LOVER'S STORY, ... 112
INSCRIPTION FOR A BIBLE, ... 116
INDIAN SUMMER, ... 117

SONNETS.

THE SONNET, ... 121
SORROW AND SONG, ... 122
PARTING, ... 123
ROBERT E. LEE, ... 124
NATURE'S SABBATHS, ... 125
MORNING IN JULY, ... 126
NOON IN JULY, ... 127
MOSES, ... 128
WORDSWORTH, ... 129
MILTON, ... 130
TO GENERAL BUSHROD R. JOHNSON, C. S. A., . . . 131
SHAKESPEARE, ... 132
"A WOMAN'S POEMS," 133
THE CLOUDS, ... 134
TO POESY, ... 135
TO ALFRED TENNYSON, ... 136
CLOVER HILL, ... 137
CLOVER HILL, ... 138
UNKNOWN, ... 139
EXPRESSION, ... 140
LABOR, ... 141
ACHIEVEMENT, ... 142
REST, ... 143
TRUE GREATNESS, ... 144

THE STUDENT'S DREAM.

This poem, written in December, 1866, and inscribed to the Louisville Library Association, which failed to make a begininng, I now re-inscribe to the present Louisville Library Association, with the confident hope that it will, at a day not distant, make the vision solid fact.

I sought my couch when worn with thought and slept,
And on my senses, sunk in slumber, crept
A vision full of pleasure, glad and gay,
In which I revel'd till the morning's gray.
In waking hours, when thinking thronged my brain
With thoughts on thoughts profuse in endless train,
I sought in books to trace their utmost worth,
For well I knew the knowledge known on earth.
But dearth of volumes bade me stop, and cease
My little stock of learning to increase;
Thus baffled oft, I longed to travel hence,
Since here my study found no recompense,
No lights to guide, no empires to explore;
All thought at sea, that sea without a shore,
While here and there some little island stood,
Not large enough for fruitful culture good,

And gave but promise of that greater land
Whose continental coasts held golden sand.
That continent I longed to see arise,
And looked toward it long with wearied eyes:
Hence, when I slept, that longing brought to view
Its mountains gleaming in the distant blue;
And as I neared the shore the fiction past,
And this clear image grew to life at last.
  Where Broadway's noble avenue doth meet
The central slumberous cathedral street,
And where, last summer, rose that mushroom hall
That echoed music from its wooden wall,
There splendid, spacious, and enduring stood
No fragile mushroom fabric built of wood;
But house of stately structure, grand to see,
As though 't was built to stand eternally.
Apart it stood and free, no neighbor nigh
To stop the healthful zephyrs floating by,
Or darken windows whence the sunshine clear
Might purify its in-door atmosphere.
Its massive walls were brick and smooth-cut stone—
Within, without, no wooden work was known;
But iron held its place for beam and floor,
For window-frame and sash, and for each door,

And seemed so excellent in its every part,
It looked the acme of the builder's art.
So with delight I passed its portals wide
To be more raptured with the wealth inside:
There, on the lowest floor, two rooms at hand,
For reading news from every clime and land;
In one were papers from each country seen,
In other from each land each magazine
And quarterly, or publication made,
In lesser dignity than book arrayed;
And there were youths and men intent to gain
Some new delight to gratify the brain.
Some with new fact, event, or foreign deed
Felt thought and mind expand the while they read;
And others still the poet's page inspire,
Where bursts in song some new melodious lyre.
These seen, I passed into the building's center,
And thence by stately stairway wide I enter
A hall, full wide and long, of lofty height,
Emblazon'd rich with mellow golden light
From painted glass in walls and frescoed ceiling,
With magic beauty all its wealth revealing.
Around the room ran shelves of iron wrought,
And on them stood great tomes of ancient thought,

And gallery on gallery imposed
Its countless store of rich-bound books disclosed.
There every age its tribute paid in kind
Through all the vast dominions of the mind;
There Grecian orators, sublimely good,
In silent ranks and waiting patient stood;
Her poets too, long dumb in solemn death,
Here waited resurrection's living breath
To charm the ear with full harmonious sound,
To make the burning pulses leap and bound
In sweetest ecstasy; full grand in thought,
With many luscious images inwrought.
There Rome renewed her rule in gentler sway,
And spread abroad an intellectual day;
Cæsar, his sword outrival'd by his pen,
No longer dreadful, lived beloved by men;
Her Cicero's sublimities inspire
New orators to emulate his fire;
Her classic Horace, exquisitely neat,
In crystal verse where strength and sweetness meet,
Irradiates the mind with rare delight,
And shines serenely with prismatic light;
And Virgil, graceful as her vales and mountains,
In smooth-writ numbers, liquid as her fountains,

Portrays the glory of her ancient state
When mild Augustus, wise and grandly great,
Reigned a monarch high, whose flags unfurled
O'er each proud province of a conquer'd world.
Nor Rome nor Greece alone held place; but place
Here found each mind-born triumph of our race,
Whether in Spain, or Portugal, or Russia,
Austria, Australia, or in warlike Prussia,
Whether in Egypt or in India wrought,
The peaceful pageant of transcendent thought.
Not least, but mightiest, great England shone,
And ringed the hall in bright unbroken zone
Of clear resplendent light; such summer days
Are wont to give when clearest noontide rays
Diffuse their warmth and splendor over earth,
Quickening life, and bringing to the birth
The seeds that lie within her mold or sand
Through all the acres of the teeming land.
Her poets and philosophers allied
Kindle my mind with all a kinship's pride;
For Milton's mighty song, in numbers clear,
Needs not translation to enchain my ear;
And godlike Shakespeare wrote my mother tongue,
And it, too, Bacon spoke and Byron sung.

If other triumphs yet waited to be won,
They stand achieved in noble Tennyson.
Not these alone are worthy to have name,
But countless hosts of others known to fame
Consecrate England in her children's eyes,
And spread her glory through the distant skies.
America held post amid the throng
In science, art, philosophy, and song;
Her statesmen stood sublimely grand and great,
Those old custodians of the infant state,
Whose counsel wisdom was, and in whose mind
Dwelt love of country, with love for mankind;
Whose laws were stringent, though without offense,
The product of their kindliness and sense;
Those monarch minds of our one golden age,
Who knew fanatic follies to assuage—
The foremost he who independence won,
Earth's noblest son, our world-loved Washington.
Historians too, their numerous ranks preserving,
Were marshalled well by Prescott and by Irving;
Her poets stood, an ever-lengthening row,
Headed by Longfellow and by weird Poe;
And endless lines of other men appear
Whom time permitteth not to mention here.

But this beside of that sweet vision sped,
To crown the close, remaineth to be said:
When all the library's vast wealth was told,
In treasure richer than the minted gold,
Close-stowed in all its glass-sheathed shelves and nooks
There rested full one hundred thousand books.
Dazzled with splendor, wakened with its gleam,
I woke to find it but a splendid dream;
To know on Broadway it existed not,
But only there, there lay the vacant lot.

But dreams in olden times prophetic grew,
And imaged forth what wonders would ensue.
So be it now! Great City, prove thy worth,
By such like noble actions brought to birth!
Nor longer let thy students languish,
Relieving thus their deepest mental anguish.
Give largest sums, munificently give;
Bid budding literature put forth and live;
Erect her palace, splendid, grand, and vast,
Worthy to house the trophies of the past,
Worthy to garner what the future brings
From him who wisely speaks or writes or sings,
And truest men will love you to the core
When this great deed is done, and not before.

THE SPIRE-BUILDERS.

In ages long ago, and dim
  In dusty annals now their story,
The deep foundation-stone, 'mid hymn
  And chant and praise and song of glory,

Was sunken far below the street,
  As deep the excavation sank
Into the sleeping earth, replete
  With geologic records dank.

And thence began in lowest deep
  The great huge walls; and year by year
The vast cathedral seemed to creep
  Into the ambient air, with care

And labor both attendant still,
  With watchful eye and ready hand
To mold it to the master's will,
  And raise a glory in the land.

At length the buttress'd walls were done,
The vaulted roof its sky out-threw,
And tinted panes let in the sun
On marble floor and crimson pew.

The organ's mighty voice awoke
The sleeping silence of the nave,
As anthem after anthem broke
With solemn pomp of stately stave.

And oft the sermon preached therein
Had wrought its work with magic force
Against embattled hosts of sin,
Of warlike mien and visage coarse.

But yet the endless work went on;
Still crept the beetling tower high,
Unto the evening from the dawn,
Into the ever-changing sky.

At length the masons' task was done:
Right glad at heart were they to end
Their ceaseless climbing to the sun,
And to loved earth again descend.

For stone on stone, in lofty height,
Stood fast in massiveness of form,
Where only birds of air had flight,
High in the home of angry storm.

So now to us alone was given
To crown at last the glorious plan,
Where skill and toil with might had striven
To build to God by art of man.

Full low within the tower we,
To art and nature builders true,
As nature anchors deep the tree
Whose head peers far within the blue,

And there must meet the wrath of heaven,
And all the elemental strife
When earth with thunderbolts is riven,
And all the air with ruin rife;

So we must anchor deep the spire,
Above whose lofty head doth none
Of greatest works of man aspire,
Of all he builds beneath the sun.

The massive beam and iron brace
The tower's ample walls enshroud;
Foundation fit for that fair grace
Of pointed shaft which cleaves the cloud.

And now beyond the topmost stone
Our frame-work lifteth up its beams,
And ever climbeth up, as zone
On zone the belting metal gleams

Upon its sloping sides, afar
Within the upper air and thin,
New-risen like a flaming star
Above the city's central din.

Below us lies the web of streets,
But like a map upon the floor;
Below us lie the masts of fleets,
And to us comes the rising roar

Of mingled murmurs, making moan
Or making melody prevail,
As sounds of woe or joy are thrown
Upon the listless air or gale.

There is a rapture thus to be
Above our fellow-men so high,
And thence to see, or seem to see,
Beyond the pale of mystic sky;

And list' to hear at morning fair,
Or at the shut of dewy eve,
The voice of spirits in the air
Their heavenly music interweave;

For whispers weird and wild we know,
As here we ply our skyward trade,
That never come to men below
Upon the mart or promenade.

At last our task is all complete;
The grand cathedral standeth fast
With architectural art replete,
And strong to stand until the last.

Its topmost cross, one golden gleam,
Uplifts its glory to the sun,
To redden first with morning's beam,
And darken last when day is done.

THE UNATTAINABLE.

The soul immortal hath desires beyond
The outmost range of possibility.
What mortal can not know it longeth for
With deep intensity, and seeks with thought
To penetrate far hence to realms remote
From ordinary facts as stars from earth.
Nor is it wholly idle to aspire,
Though we attain not that majestic height
To which from out the depths we gaze upon
With vision darkened by obscuring cloud;
For if we strive, we do attain an end
Which, but for strife, would never have been ours.

So sought Columbus but a novel route
To Indies which were known, and found instead
The unknown Indies and these continents,
Which doubled man's inheritance of earth.
So he who seeks to scale the summit snow
That crowns the loftiest alp, although denied

That rapture unattainable, yet sees,
From whence with baffled aim he turneth back,
Below him lie great mountains and vast plains
In loveliness and splendor infinite,
And drinketh thence a richer wine of life
Than groweth in the cloudy vales below.

The unattainable! And what is such?
For things seem such to feeble folk which be
But gay pastime and sport to stronger men.
How much to us, as clear as sunlit noon,
But yesterday was wrapt about with cloud,
Or hid in night that seemed as Egypt black.
The steam, once thought but vapor weak as smoke,
Now clothed in iron, wields gigantic power,
Enlarging man's dominion both on land
And sea, and conquering time and less'ning space.
The lightning, once the scourge and dread of man,
Now does his bidding with submissiveness;
And man to man, a thousand leagues apart,
Now talks as easily as though they sat
Together by a single blazing hearth.
Ten thousand facts, our common heritage,
Were once as little known as these, ere yet,

Through forests never trod by foot of man,
Some pioneer in knowledge blazed the way;
Ten thousand thousand yet remain concealed
Perhaps as potent in their usefulness
As those we vaunt so high. Then gird thyself,
Thou dreamer, and march forward to the fight!
There be other worlds to conquer yet
Worth more than Alexander's, and they call
For nobler-hearted chieftains to subdue them!
Those gloomy clouds which still obscure the day,
Before his steadfast gaze who strives amain,
Dissolve—like mists of morning flee away.
The starry foreheads shed in front their light,
And walk in open day where other men
Go stumbling backward into darker night.

•

Up then and strive, for though the infinite
May never be completely comprehended,
Still less remote, as we advance, will grow
The ultimately unattainable.
Look up! But seldom comes a night so dark
But through some rift of cloud a single star
Doth glance with look of gentle kindliness,
Revealing clear a pathway plain and fair,

And giving guidance true to wandering feet.
Press on! Not often in his path appears
Obstacle dread or insurmountable
Who treads undaunted, though alone, the road
Whose farther end gleams grandly luminous
With holy Duty's flaming pillar of fire.

SAUL.

I Samuel, Chapter XI.

When Israel had no earth-born king,
  When Samuel was her priest,
And only God was Lord and King,
  The roads which wended east

Became all black with hosts of foemen.
  From front to distant rear
Came active slingers, brawny bowmen,
  Came many a shining spear.

Ferocious Ammonites were they,
  With Nahash for their chief,
To Jabesh bent their long array,
  To take her ere relief

From Israel's scattered strength afar
  Be summoned to her aid,
And in this new-made pagan war
  Her brave men draw the blade.

When circled Jabesh asked for right,
Was this condition given:
"From all your strongest men of might
Must each right eye be riven;

And this indignity be known
As Ammon's mark of hate,
Branded on Israel's trampled crown
And on her abject state."

Then Jabesh answered Ammon thus:
"Give us but seven days
To know if God help you or us;
In which, on all our ways,

Be sped our messengers of woe
With tidings of our state;
How round our walls encamp the foe,
And knocketh at our gate.

If sets the seventh dusky sun
And Israel be not here,
We 'll own your triumph fairly won—
Your cruel branding bear."

So messengers sped swiftly forth
To summon the array,
From east and west, from south and north,
Before the fatal day.

Gibeah heard the sad'ning tale;
Her people cried aloud;
With grief and fear and hopeless wail
Stood gathered in a crowd.

When Saul at evening came with cattle
From out the distant field,
And knew that Israel must give battle
Or Jabesh basely yield,

God's Spirit sat upon his soul,
While anger swelled his breast,
And scarce his temper brooked control,
And shook his haughty crest.

Straight choosing of his herd the best,
In pieces cleft a yoke;
Sent them by men, and this request
To Israel he spoke:

"Round Jabesh Ammon's hosts lie spread;
Shut are her gates of brass;
But they will open to his tread
If seven days shall pass,

And to her aid no chief appears,
Strong to stay the falling rod,
And, girt with fields of men and spears,
Make Ammon yield to God.

Ye see the bloody tokens sent
To warn you to obey;
Thus Saul will make each man repent
Who fails him on that day,

When he doth summon from afar,
In Israel's sorest need,
Unto his ranks, array'd for war,
Abraham's chosen seed."

Then sped the messengers of Saul
Through Canaan's utmost coasts;
Proclaimed the tidings and the call,
And told the foeman's boasts.

Like ocean when, in placid rest,
He calmly taketh sleep,
So Israel lay, her peaceful breast
All wrapt in slumber deep.

As ocean when by storm awoke,
A myriad host appears;
So Israel from their slumber broke
Three hundred thousand spears.

With thirty thousand Judah came
To join that vast array;
Nor thirsted she for idle fame,
Nor came she for display;

But to rescue Jabesh from the hands
Of Nahash and his host;
To trample under foot her bands,
And quell his haughty boast.

When Saul beheld these arméd men,
All eager for the fight,
His soul swelled high with pleasure then—
His kingly eyes grew bright.

Then turning to the men who brought
The tidings of dismay,
He said: "Ye 'll have the rescue sought
Before the seventh day.

To Jabesh bear this message true:
'To-morrow, when the sun
Is highest seen in heaven's blue,
Your safety shall be won.'"

When Jabesh heard Saul's message told,
She shouted wild with mirth,
And all her anguish'd hearts grew bold,
And gladder seemed the earth.

To Nahash then she sent to say:
"To-morrow on the plain,
To-morrow ere the heat of day,
We march our humbled train.

We 'll suffer there whate'er your will
Accords our cursed lot,
If Israel bring no succor still
Before the sun grow hot."

But long before that morning's dawn
Saul summoned his array,
And marched in three strong columns drawn,
And ere the twilight's gray,

On Ammon's camp he launched his wrath,
And smote his hosts with slaughter;
Behind him lay a dreadful path
Where blood ran rills like water.

And when the morning's fog had cleared,
Joyous Jabesh rent the air;
For Ammon's hosts had disappeared,
And Israel was there.

The people's heart grew merry now,
And drunk with pride they reeled,
And thought to crown the lofty brow
That plann'd the bloody field.

They shouted unto Samuel: "Bring
Us here the foes of Saul,
Who said he should not be our king,
And hang them on the wall."

Said Saul: "No man shall die to-day
Of all this mighty nation,
For God's right arm did Ammon slay,
And wrought us this salvation."

But Samuel said: "The people's thought
Is just and true for all;
Though God this great salvation wrought,
His instrument was Saul.

To Gilgal now we 'll haste and go,
To God hosannas sing;
The people's wishes shall be so,
And Saul be crownéd king."

EQUALITY.

There is a fashion now in vogue that
Doth prattle nonsense of equality,
As though it reigned established law throughout
God's world, and all were anarchy beside.
But search through Nature, probe her truth, and see
If she acknowledge such to be her rule;
And turn to Art, and ask of her if she
Accounts all deeds at par in excellence.
Then to Art's master turn, and ask of Man
If all things weigh alike in his esteem;
Is nothing great and nothing low, but all
One level plain of nothingness and sham?
However these reply, a last appeal remains:
To God bow down, and humbly ask of him
If all things equal are, and all of like
Degree. However Nature, Art, or Man
May err, no error is in Him. What He
Affirms can never be denied, but standeth,
Like mountains stand, when lesser things decay.

Then, Nature, tell thou us if equal oaks
You rear upon the moist and loamy plain,
And on the bleak and furrow'd mountain-top?
If grasses grow with equal strength on rocks
And in the flooded valley's fruitful soil?
Do all thy rivers roll an equal tide?
Do all thy lakes contain an equal mete
Of depth and compass; all thy seas the same
Area, a like amount and kind of water?
Do all thy mountains pierce an equal height
The cloudy dome of sky? Are all thy vast
Divisions equal in extent and richness?
And Nature answers unreservedly:
Not one of these is true. The oak I rear
Upon the plains, the child of centuries,
Whose girth thou canst not compass quite with thrice
Extended arms, whose head a hundred feet
Uplifts, to build great navies fit and meet,
Doth on the mountains dwindle to a shrub,
But fit to twirl within the hand and brush
The flies away, or urge the lagging steed.
The stunted grass that grows a film on rocks
Rises a sea on prairies, in whose waves
The horse and rider flounder and are lost.

My mountains bear but tiny streams of water,
Unequal in their size and flow and hue;
My valleys bear enlarging streams; my plains
Collect the mighty Amazonian floods.
Not two of all my lakes are equal found
In any feature; and my seas are various
As are their names in volume and in kind:
E'en ocean is not one, but diverse as
His climates are; as here tempestuous,
And there serene; here tepid, frozen there.
My mountains lift unequal heads, and look
On plains unequal in extent, which lie
On continents that are not found to hold
Two equal things within their coasts.
Throughout my realms resemblance rules a law
Unquestioned and obeyed; but never once
Among distinct and sole existences
Doth reign as law a strict equality.

To Art address thyself, and ask of her
If curb-stone and Corinthian capital
An equal skill attest; or whether she
Accounts of like degree the shapeless blocks
Of stone she hides in deep foundations,

And those she lifts upon the crown and apex
Of lofty temples, rich with carven grace;
If milestones are as statues, great alike;
And if the canvas is a triumph proud
As that which paints a loveliness upon it?
And she will answer, No; not so are these;
But all are of degree, and each attests
A separate, distinctive merit, sole
And various as are the needs of men
And their capacities to fulfill them.

Turn then to Man, to him of balanced mind,
To Man when no fanaticism holds him
A slave within its blindfold thralldom bound,
And ask of him what of equality
He sees among the races of his kind.
And he will answer straight, No two alike.
But all alike dissimilar and sole
In their peculiarities as are
The clouds in Summer days or leaves in Autumn;
For, looking through the lens of history,
He there beholds a little state arise
In southern Greece, where men were ripened best,
Which shed a halo, new to Earth, on art,

And architecture, painting, poetry,
At last become the mistress of the world;
But lacking something—something that seals power
With an endurance of dominion;
See her lose all again, become once more
A little state, with but a legend left
Of what she had achieved, the men she bore,
The countries conquered, and all her glory.
Then see a town become a state, and still
The state an empire grow; breed men of war;
Raise armies vast, and hold a world in bondage—
A bondage that endured for centuries;
For she reared men to whom to rule was native
As life; dominion grew her pastime, and
She measured Earth upon her thousand highways
From that great golden milestone in her forum.
In all their story no two men alike:
Some poets, sculptors some, and orators,
And generals, and statesmen; but alone
Excelling others in peculiar lines
Of individuality of mind.

But with all reverence now ask of God,
Are all men equal, Lord, that thou hast made?

And well the Bible doth reply to thee,
Did God to every man address himself,
Or did he speak to Moses only, and
Through him to Israel give commandment high?
Did ever sun and moon stand still at voice
Of any man save that which Joshua spoke?
Were all earth's kings addressed as Cyrus was,
That God had ordered him a task to do
Not one save he had power to fulfill?
Were all the sons of Jesse great as David?
Were all the sons of David wise as was
King Solomon, or fair as Absalom?
Had all the Judges ruling Israel
An equal strength of limb with Samson,
Or did he excel? Was every prophet Samuel's peer,
And every son of Kish a prince like Saul?
Did every swart Philistine's common voice
An equal fear inspire with that Goliath
Upraised to mock the men of Israel,
And make them quake with fear? In Saul's great host
Were stronger men than David found, but not
Among them beat a heart as stout as his.
Belshazzar made a feast unto his lords
In Babylon, but none save Daniel knew

That feast his last, and none the written wall
Could read but he, though many there were wise.
And "Jacob have I loved, and Esau have
I hated, saith the Lord," is but a type
Of that unchanging law of difference,
Existent ever, and declared by God
A thousand times, whence resteth no appeal.

THE BALLAD OF SERGEANT BATES.

The cruel civil war was o'er;
In peaceful relaxation
For three long years had now reposed
The soldiers of the Nation;

When in Wisconsin, round a fire,
Some neighbors talked of state,
And one condemned with manly zeal
(As waxed the warm debate)

The slow-paced plan of reconstruction
That Congress had imposed,
Asserting that the Southern mind
True loyalty disclosed.

Another said with heat, "Not so,
The rebels hate us still;
Nor will I think them free of it
Until on any hill

In all the South the stars and stripes,
  Without the sense of fear,
May float aloft its ample folds
  Without a soldier near."

Then Sergeant Bates ('t was he) replied:
  "This I 'll engage to show;
I 'll take that banner that we love
  And through the South I 'll go.

From Vicksburg unto Washington,
  In open light of day,
Alone, unarmed, and moneyless,
  I 'll walk the beaten way.

I want not wager or reward;
  One lone request I ask—
While I am gone from home and friends
  To do this pleasant task,

That you who wish it done agree
  My family to pay
A workman's wages, less nor more
  Than just one dollar a day."

'T was done as soon as said, and he
Who loved the South set out
To take his chance for good or ill
That ambushed all the route.

And men looked on with fear the while
This strangest test was made;
And some looked on with love and hope,
And some their hate betrayed.

For many wished him harm who thought
He might get safely through,
And with his honored banner prove
The Southern States were true.

For well they knew their lease of life
In base-born politics
Was only due to knavery,
And bolstered up by tricks.

So they made prayer to evil gods
To look with anger down,
And in some rebel haunt to blast
Him with their vengeful frown.

But Heaven holds but one alone
(Their heathen gods are dead),
And this One looked in love on him,
And evil angels fled.

And where he thought to move alone,
There thousands came to meet him;
And where he thought to hear no songs,
The Nation's anthems greet him.

And old men wept to see once more,
In love and not in hate,
The olden banner borne aloft
Through all the tranquil state.

And children ran to catch the glow
Of friendly love upon it;
Nor did one rebel finger raise,
Or eye avert to shun it.

And he who came in poverty
Lacked nothing on his way;
For food and shelter rich and poor
Gave freely every day.

That banner proved his talisman
On every route he bore it,
And barréd gates and bolted doors
Flew open wide before it.

Unarmed a single soldier bore
It through the Southern Land,
Where once a hundred thousand men
Were all too small a band.

But when he came to Washington,
Where government hath home,
To fling unto the breeze his flag
From out the central dome,

A tyrant Congress, sitting there,
The stately portals closed,
And bade that flag, on which in love
A Nation's eyes reposed,

Be gone, unfurl itself elsewhere.
"Then throw it to the sun,"
Said one, "from that unfinished shaft
To godlike Washington;

For he was Nature's Noble, born,
And to his country true;
But these are little men and base,
And know not what they do."

A REAL DREAM.

I dreamed myself a youth, just grown to manhood,
Riding a pleasant road which wander'd south.
Joyously wild, it led me gladly on
Until a river, clear and swift and deep,
Came into view. How I reached the farther bank
My dream explainéd not. But so I did,
And thence rose gradually up the side
Of hill that nearly mountain seemed, so bold
And strong its rocky bastions were, which hid
Their bases far beneath the river's tide.
It rose abruptly, but unbroken still,
Close-clothed with forest, or where not, with rich
Interchange of glad grass-plots, green and mossy,
Where sun and shade made checker'd counterpart.
Swift-running, joyous rills made music sweet,
And birds sang merrily in lofty trees.
The way, though steep, seemed easy, for the heart
Was lighten'd hearing sounds of pleasantry.
The top was scaled at last, and there lay spread

A broad plateau, not vast, but wide enough
To hold an ample mansion-house of stone,
That stood four-square, with porticoes around,
And lawns about it spread—fit home of ease,
Of princely quiet, dignified retirement;
And waiting in its halls a lady sat,
Beautiful as that eastern queen whose eyes
Were pearls of such surpassing loveliness,
Great captains empires lost adoring them.
Gifted was she in speech, and quiet ways
Of womanhood in its fair morning's prime.
The household too were like her in their sphere,
The father, mother, and one brother all;
But guests were there, and jovial cheer withal.
Glad welcome gave me ease, and soon I learn'd
To feel the wise contentment of the place.
Northward the eyes found rest on level landscape;
But far below the hill, beyond the river,
Which showed not from the portico, so close
It ran beneath the hill's protruding brow:
Far, far away it stretch'd, like sunlit clouds,
Its fields and forests great; its homes and hamlets
Soften'd into beauty by great distance.
But to the west and east rose higher hills

With wavy outline, shadowy valleys dark,
And sunny peaks uplifted high in cloud-land;
While to the south, but nearer, rose a hill
With ascent difficult, but possible:
And there at early morning I beheld
A huntsman swift pursuing four fat bucks;
His gun brought down the hindmost one, the others
Were disappearing 'mong the hill-top trees
As I awoke and found my pleasure dream.

BOONE TO THE INDIANS OF KENTUCKY.

BOONE.

Hail to thee, thou red chieftain, who hunteth the deer!
Make a pause in your chase, and heed while you hear!
I come from the east, like the sun of the morning,
And herald an age of enlightenment dawning:
I know, as I speak, you will curse the pale-face,
And hope for a time to wield woe on his race;
But with doom in his words, and with death in his blows,
He demands of ye now, be ye friends or his foes?
He knows that ye live by the bow and the hound,
And game that ye trap on the "dark bloody ground;"
But 't is his to live by the wealth of the soil,
Unfolding to labor its fruits for his toil.
Ye dwell in a wild, without house, without home,
And kill what ye can as ye wearily roam;
The night-dews enrobe thee in stark death as ye lie
With no shelter o'er ye but the dome of the sky.

From the coast of the sea, for a hundred leagues back,
The foot of the white man has follow'd your track;
Again does he come, with his numbers increased,
And flows like a tide from the populous east:
Be it yours now to say, will ye yield to his sway,
Or shout the wild war-whoop that leads to the fray?

THE CHIEFTAIN'S REPLY.

Back! back! to the east, pale-face, return!
Thy words make the blood of the Indian burn;
He longs for the hour his vengeance to wreak
On the foe that has followed the path of the weak.
Thy taunts and thy threats we doubly defy,
We never will yield, and we fear not to die;
We care not for thy wealth, we stoop not to thy toil,
But live as we please, like true sons of the soil.
Back! back! to the east, pale-face, retire!
We love not your friendship, we dread not your ire;
And here let us rest in our woodland retreat,
And go while you can, in this truce, we entreat.
But should you still hope to gain by your might
That which you fail to accomplish by right,
Then think of the storm as it thunders on high
And darts its swift arrows of death through the sky;

Then recall, if you can, the dread hurricane's wrath,
And view in dismay his most desolate path.
If in war you should come, like these is the foe
That awaits to whelm thee in unspeakable woe!
Like the oaks of the mountains which fall where they
grew,
We will die ere we yield these forests to you!
Then back to the east, pale-face, repair,
Or we 'll feed with thy flesh the wolf and the bear!

BOONE.

Thou hast spoken thy hate; but thy hate can not stay
The strong tide which is swelling to sweep thee away.
My sons, and not yours, will here camp for all time,
In those years that are fraught with a story sublime;
When both ye and your legends shall fade and grow
old,
And be only remember'd a tale that is told.

THE PIONEER'S MONOLOGUE.

To my father I inscribe these verses, whose eyes have seen all the changes therein described.

When first I rested here,
The common game was deer;
And wide o'er plain and hill,
And dark o'er pond and rill,
Arose the forest high,
And spread a lower sky
For those who 'neath its shade
A new-found home had made.
The sunrise scarce I knew,
So thick the monarchs grew;
So dense the shade they cast,
The sunbeams rarely pass'd
Beneath their lofty heads
To warm the flower-beds,
Save where some lake lay wide,
Or on some hill's bright side;
And all the sounds I heard
Were those of beast or bird.

Nature's untutor'd grace
Then everywhere had place,
Ere man usurp'd her reign
And cleared the land for gain.
Then I, like other men
(For all were brothers then),
Began to war upon
The banishers of sun.
The brave old trees, which stood
Like lofty kings of th' wood,
Headlong fell on every side,
And lost their regal pride;
Both small and great fell prone,
By man's slight strength o'erborne.
Then rose the cabin rude
To cheer the solitude.
Around me grew each year,
As I began to clear,
A broader sweep of fields,
As woods to corn-land yields;
And farther off there stood
The dwindling belt of wood,
As the new acres felt
The falling rain-drops pelt

With unaccustom'd beat,
And felt the glowing heat
Of sunshine stir their heart
To take a novel part,
Through God's high providence,
In labor's recompense.
As mine, so others grew,
Until what once were two
Became expansive one,
And open'd to the sun
A wider width of plain
For man-sustaining grain.
But years went by in scores
Ere yet from near my doors,
Beyond the forest green,
A neighbor's house was seen;
And here I lived alone,
In a kingdom of my own,
With none to say me nay,
With none to brook my sway.
My cabin soon gave place
To house of wider space;
While fast on every side
My buildings multiplied,

Till my little lonely home
A hamlet had become;
Till my single family
A people grew to be,
When, as great nations do,
I colonized them too.
Thus great are changes grown
Which these my eyes have known:
Where once slept solitude
In nature's wildest mood,
Now merry parties meet
To chase with flying feet,
Beneath the shade of May,
The fleeting hours of day;
Where silence sat of yore
Now noisy engines roar;
And roads run miles away
Beneath the garish day,
Undarken'd by a shade,
Where erst I knew no glade
To waken up from deep
Slumber whole forests asleep.
And from before my door,
Unlike the times of yore,

At any hour of day,
The houses far away
Are numerously seen,
Without that forest screen
Which many years ago
Curtailed the vision so.
  Nay! a city rises bold,
With spires and domes of gold,
Whence from her massive towers
Great bells proclaim the hours.
O'er distant, low horizon
I greet the morning sun,
And track his pathway true
Until he sinks from view,
Behind the hills in th' west,
Unto his golden rest.
When darkness gloometh all
Without in murky pall,
I turn within, and greet
My hearthstone's mellow heat.
In every room but one
The jetty fuel, won
From Alleghanian mines,
With brilliant luster shines;

But yet I love my fire,
Whence still the sparks aspire
From glowing logs of wood;
For there I find a good
And loving link, the last,
With ages that have past.

MAY.

I sit beneath the checker'd shade,
  This merry morn of May,
And see the waning shadows show
  The growing of the day;

I hear from leafy boughs the birds,
  In sweetest concert, sing
A song of wondrous melody
  In welcome to the Spring;

I hear the music of the leaves,
  While with the wind at play,
The forest worshipeth in song
  Unto the God of May.

KENTUCKY TO PRESIDENT JOHNSON.

1865.

I 'm the giant Kentucky! I live in the heart
Of the land; and am come my mind to impart
To the chief who sits where of old Washington sat,
Ere good men became beggars, and rogues had grown
fat.

I am rich in all nature's endowments of soil;
E'en the rock doth enrich me with rivers of oil;
Full broad are my fields, and my forests are great,
And I live like a noble of vast estate.

I have herds on my fields; I have flocks on my hills;
I have corn in my barns; I have grist at my mills;
I have steeds which outstrip the swift wind in their
speed;
I have all that a lord or a king may need.

I have a sky spread above me, bright, balmy, and mild,
Where in Summer my empires of cloud are empiled;

I have pastures and woodlands with pearly clear
streams,
Such as poets alone have beheld in their dreams.

I have caverns whose secrets no tongue could unfold,
But such as woke song ere the world had grown old;
I have children in thousands to share in my wealth;
I have proper digestion and very good health.

But some things now disturb me! Great father, pray
Make your servants quit running my servants away!
And since I 've begun just to talk to you plain,
I 'll tell you some more that is heaving my brain.

Both I and my brothers are sovereigns by birth;
But you were elected to give you your worth,
And reared by us giants to work for our pleasure—
We 'll show you where to find just the cloth for your
measure.

The directions you 'll see in a musty old scroll,
Which the sire whom you follow would never unroll;
Just open it, air it, and give it the light—
Just heed it and all wrong it will teach you to right.

Much doth it decree of justice impartial;
Much saith it of law—but not much of law-martial;
One great Habeas Corpus it mentions by name,
And enjoineth on you to take care of his fame.

It is written full fairly, with never a blot,
And there are things in it I much fear you 've forgot;
Just read it over thoughtfully once and again,
It will point you to wrongs of which I complain.

Then stand up and do what it tells you is right,
And error and evil will flee from your sight;
And good men will bless you, though bad men may
hate,
As you raise from the dust my proud ægis of state.

ON THE HEIGHTS AT NOON.

Suggested by a view from Cox's Knob, six miles south of Louisville, Kentucky.

I stood upon the summit height
That crowned a stony wood-clad hill,
And far below me, spreading bright,
Saw field and forest sleeping still.
The hazy air was dim with smoke,
And August's sun did scorch the land;
Yet seldom on my vision broke
A scene so lovely and so grand.

From out the air, for miles around,
From all that plain of verdant hue,
Came never throb of human sound,
Although a city lay in view;
Nor seemed there life within its sky,
Save here and there upon the sight,
In wide-drawn circles, far and high,
Some buzzard winged his drowsy flight.

A long-known stone from out the hill,
Which there for ages had reposed,
Was now descending to fulfill
Its destined purpose, late disclosed;
And half-way down the hill-side road
A broken wagon prostrate lay,
That with its first too heavy load
Came creeping down the narrow way.

This set me musing on the power
That time would wield o'er all in view;
How men would build the lofty tower,
The stately store and structure new;
And, as the city gained in strength,
This hill be crumbled into naught,
Until the plain, all filled, at length
For city lots its site be bought.

And where, below, no sound I hear,
Her giant adamantine lungs
Shall set the smoky air astir
From brazen throats and iron tongues;
But yet, perhaps, it may not be,
And other fate awaits the scene
That lies below so tranquilly,
So rich in promise, and so green.

For other plains as fair have perished,
And other cities, full as proud,
As buoyant with the hopes they cherished,
Have faded like an evening cloud;
The garniture of fields with heat
Consumed, and withered up with drouth,
Till bounding pulses ceased to beat,
And tongues grew still in every mouth.

And all the pomp of stately streets
Have sunk in squalor and in shame;
Without the sight of merchant fleets,
As lost to traffic as to fame.
So this might be; her towers fall,
Her marble palaces decay,
Her commerce fail, and over all
The owl and bat have lonely sway.

For nations rise and shine and sink,
And one by one drop back again,
Until there lives no severed link
To tie them in the chain of men.
And countries which were great and high,
And rich in arms and arts and lore,
Now blink beneath a brazen sky
Their barren fields and desert shore.

But be it not so here, I pray!
God free our souls from all such fears,
And grant us yet a brighter day,
And lift us still to higher spheres!
Give still thy sunshine and thy rains,
And of thy love let grow no dearth,
Till burst hosannas o'er our plains
As heaven's light illumines earth.

TO ONE IN HEAVEN.

Amid the throng that sing on high
The praises of the Lamb,
A sister sweet and fair have I,
Who loves the great I Am.

If angel eyes are ever shown
The scenes upon the earth,
Oh! Thou that sittest on the throne,
Permit my near of birth

To look upon a sinner here,
And bless with love and joy,
Whom once she call'd her brother dear,
When she was young and coy!

Before me lies a little thing;
By you to me 't was given,
Ere yet your soul away did wing
Its happy flight to heaven.

It is a little fountain playing
  Within a work of art;
It seems to be forever saying
  A lesson to my heart.

Two dove-like birds, with wings half furled,
  Sit poised upon a vase;
While one seems on another world
  To gaze with steady face,

The other yet on earth would stay—
  He loves the water-streams;
He loves to greet the king of day
  And revel in his beams.

Oh! may not these fit emblems be,
  And, ah! I fear too true:
The last of these is like to me—
  The first resembles you.

But oh! my sister, once so sweet,
  If God will e'er allow,
I hope with thee again to meet
  And low before Him bow.

TO THE AËRONAUT AND HIS CRAFT.

Up! up! from out the shouting crowd he went,
While thrice ten thousand eyes were on him bent;
'Neath him a steed complete from earth did rise,
To tread the pathless highways of the skies;
Far up, beyond the highest city spire,
Full half a thousand dizzy feet and higher.
Descending from the car with easy grace,
The aëronaut assumes the rider's place,
Salutes the crowd below with lofty pride,
And leaves the city for a country ride.
The country reached—'t was by the air-line route—
He sinks, alights, and turns his charger out;
Then rose the silken orb again on high,
And floated westward through the evening sky.
Majestically slow it came, and grand,
And looked a stranger from a brighter land;
The air was still, as if in awe it knew
That life hung balanced in the limpid blue;

The breezes slept, the winds had fled afar,
And all was silent round the floating car.
Thou floatest, fragile globe, so proudly away,
As seeking to o'ertake the dying day;
But tempt thou not the winds when storms are loud,
Nor dare to penetrate the thunder-cloud,
Lest lightning's wrath envelop thee with fire,
Or headlong gale do rend thee in his ire:
But, sun-like, now thou sinkest in the west—
Far may you fly, and may your flight be blest.

ON READING

"THE POETS AND POETRY OF THE WEST."

I've read the massive volume through
With pleasure and delight;
It hath so many pictures true,
So many landscapes bright,

That unto me the way, though long,
Seemed full of pleasant places;
Its varied store of richest song
Was fraught with mellow graces.

The pages of the mighty book
Were like some wide-spread land,
And I, a horseman, glad to look
Afar on either hand.

The road was smooth and long and wide,
With graceful curve and bend,
And rippling streamlets by its side
Wherever it might wend.

Now here it passed through country fair
And glorious to be seen,
With life in all its balmy air,
And all its fields in green;

And then it wound o'er rolling hills
Of gentle slopes and swells,
Made joyous by the falling rills,
And glad with shaded dells,

Then forest shadows fell across
The still and somber road,
Where olden trees, begirt with moss,
Gave hawk and owl abode;

And boding sounds, of wildness bred,
The listening horseman heard,
And ancient terrors woke his dread
In every leaf that stirred.

And then again, the woodland past,
The scenes more cheerful grew;
More ample, great, and grandly vast,
And clad in richer hue.

On either hand great mountains thrust
  Their skyward summits high
Above the clouds of vales adust
  And waving fields of rye,

Where rivers rolled in summer flow
  Through shady reaches dun,
Or gleamed like mirrors, all aglow
  And sparkling in the sun.

Now wound the road dark cliffs among,
  Where wilds of ancient doom
Lay hid from all save those who sung
  Their lone sequester'd gloom;

And there it gained some summit high,
  'Neath heaven's azure dome,
Whence visions blest the joyful eye
  Where 'er it turned to roam;

And far below lay sunny ways
  Beneath the horseman's sight,
And he beheld as far as day's
  Horizon beamed with light.

The air was pure; its health-infusing
Balminess like incense seemed,
And life appear'd a vision's musing
Joyousness of one that dreamed.

Short time he paused and gazed his fill,
Then onward sped he down
To lower heights—some lesser hill,
Some plain in dusky brown:

For, as upon the earth we tread,
All landscapes are not fair;
But some with dust and gloom o'erspread,
So some were dusky there.

But ever, as I rode, I heard,
Amid the lowest plains,
Some giant speak some mighty word,
And saw some stately fanes;

And oft, at intervals of quiet,
From out some dark-hued cloud,
Summoning all the elements to riot,
Burst shout as thunder loud.

And once, in mountains wild and drear,
"The Spirit of Earthquake" grand
Did in terrific strength appear,
And shook the solid land,

O'erwhelming mountains vast and tall,
Rock-based and forest-clad;
O'erspread hushed earth with funeral pall
Till even joy grew sad.

But ever, as I rode along,
And sat my steed at ease,
Some mellow bursts of sweetest song
Did my soften'd spirit please.

ARTISTS.

The poet, painter, sculptor, architect,
Are artists all, in labors they project,
If each works true to some sublime ideal,
And molds his mind to modulate the real:
To make divine his special field of art,
To stir the soul and sanctify the heart.
Some rays of God's own light must each one know,
With which his work should all divinely glow,
And thus display full plain to men who look
To read the pages of great Nature's book,
That all we see or feel or think should be
But parts of one vast, world-wide harmony.

THE EAGLE'S VISION.

As I lay upon the grass
On a sultry summer's day,
Mindful of the thoughts that pass
When the mind doth idly play,

Suddenly upon my view
Came a key to fancies regal;
For I mark'd within the blue,
Dimly seen, and far, an eagle.

Like a speck he floated high,
Like a soul that 's disenthralled,
And this spirit in the sky
To my mind these musings called.

Twice ten thousand feet
Lay below his lofty flight;
Thence from atmosphere so sweet
He with telescopic sight

Saw the vision of this orb—
All that lay within his ken;
And its beauty might absorb
E'en the minds of thoughtful men.

For he saw a lovely land
Stretching far on every side;
Leagues on leagues, without a strand,
Richest landscape rolling wide.

Saw what man might scarcely hope,
Should a mountain rise as high,
Lifting him upon its cope
Into crystal realms of sky.

Saw fair Louisville below,
Like an eastern monarch's crown,
Rich with pearls and rubies glow,
But the semblance of a town.

For her stately streets and ways
Seemed but gleams of silver light,
As they shed their mingled rays
On his penetrating sight.

For although he saw them clear
With his wonder-waking eye,
Yet as small they did appear
As doth gossamer on high.

And the roads which run about,
Interknitting here and there,
Like a spider's web spread out,
Interlinking everywhere;

And the homes and houses each,
When not hidden in the shade,
Shone like pebbles on the beach
Where the waves have lately strayed;

And the hamlets all along,
As they lay upon the way,
Where like pauses in a song
That musicians love to play.

Field and forest were but light
Interwoven with the dark,
Looking black or looking bright,
As the shade or sun in park;

And the rivers, rolling slow,
  Shone like molten-silver streams,
As in slightly ruffled flow
  They grew diamonded with gleams.

Hills and valleys did but lie
  Like the rumples on a floor,
When the carpet riseth high
  From the gust beneath the door;

For no mountains rose to view,
  Though his eye on distance gazed,
Peering far within the blue;
  Only hills their foreheads raised,

Only plains in prairies spread,
  To the soaring eagle's eye;
Only land that man might tread
  Lay below the sunny sky.

And the heat of summer's drouth
  Parched the plains whence rain had fled;
So the eagle floated south,
  To the heights where he was bred,

That he there might furl his pinions
On those airy summits standing,
In the unexplored dominions
Whence rose granite cliffs commanding;

That he there might rest his feet
On the mountain-tops he knew,
And his old companions greet
With the legends which were new.

These were thoughts which woke emotion
As he sailed the sea of air
As a ship might sail the ocean
When the waves and winds are fair.

ASPIRATION.

In manhood's morn he looketh to be great,
And shine from far, a beacon to the state.

At noon, though aspiration still be high,
He finds a little less will satisfy.

At evening's close, he thinks it will suffice
If virtue hath eclipsed the reign of vice.

And happy he if at the second birth
He heireth heaven for what hath passed on earth.

THE AUTUMN FOREST.

The hickory hath a leaf of bronze,
The poplar it hath gold,
The beech as yet hath summer's garb,
The deep-hued green of old.

The maple wears a yellow crown,
The sassafras is red,
While on the ample white-oak boughs
Are green and crimson wed.

The sweet-gum leaves, like purple stars,
In clusters thick are seen,
And other trees are gay or grand
With all the hues between.

The forest standeth still and vast,
With splendor so sublime,
It looketh like a temple built
By God in olden time.

For temples reared by men are grand
With but a single form;
The genius which conceived them
But once fore 'er grew warm.

But here the glory ever changeth
With th' everchanging sky,
And shaft and aisle are varied oft
As centuries roll by.

Each season hath its psalm of praise
For every new-born day;
The Spring doth sing its hopeful hymn
As soft and sweet as May;

And Summer's anthems are as full
Of hearty prayer and praise
As are her noontides full of warmth,
And full of light her days.

Sad Autumn's lay hath melancholy's
Deep retrospective sighs,
Just lisped from gorgeous foliage
Unto her gorgeous skies.

But Winter shrieks his dirges dire
Through aisles full bleak and bare,
And strikes his cords with frozen hands
Wild in the frozen air,

Until anew the Spring recurs,
And chants again her joy;
And earth and air grow happy then—
As happy as a boy.

And yet again the forest glows
In all its verdant dress,
And lapses into splendor with
Its ancient stateliness.

THE SNOW.

I woke from a soothing, soft slumber one morning,
And peeped from my curtain-clad chamber at dawning:
Without lay the earth with a snow on her breast,
And fleecy white flakes slowly fell from the west.

The morning was calm as the face of the ocean,
Where the waves lie at rest, and the ship has no motion.
Now the night had been cold and had frozen the rill,
And it slept under snow at the foot of the hill.

As the snow ceased to fall and the clouds cleared away,
The horizon lit up with the dawning of day;
The landscape disclosed a most beautiful scene,
And had changed for the white its own mantle of green.

The silent old forest stood gleaming in white;
The head of the oak grew gray on the sight;
The maple's dark skin became prettily pale;
And the beech stood enrobed in a silvery veil.

Each tree of the forest received the gay suit,
And rejoiced in white from its top to its root;
The willow alone, as she swayed to and fro,
Refused the gay garb, and continued her woe.

The sun, when he rose, was so charmed with the show
That he would have looked on without melting the snow;
But a gale from the south blew warm through the trees,
And the snow fled away in the breath of the breeze.

CLOVER HILL EIGHTY YEARS AGO.

Just here, upon this rising ground,
Where civil life now smiles around,
And garden roses breathe perfume,
A forest stood of deepest gloom.

And there, upon that smiling mead,
Where flocks and skipping lambs now feed,
The timid stag with antlers crowned,
Nor felt the lead, nor feared the hound.

In yonder forest's peaceful scene,
All mantled in its cloak of green,
Where now domestic cattle low,
There ranged, there fed the buffalo;

While high within its leafy court
The cougar with her whelps did sport;
There too the bear, with cubs and mate,
Held revel in his savage state.

In yonder pool, so cool and calm,
Wild-goose and swan together swam;
While near, within the bordering brake,
Lurked cunning fox and rattlesnake.

And high within the upper air,
Where mighty birds alone may dare,
Through all the livelong summer day,
The eagle floated, seeking prey.

No rumbling wheel nor whistling steam
Had broke the spell of nature's dream;
Nor mansion reared its ample form,
A shelter from the Summer storm;

But where the farmer plows the plain,
Or garners now his harvest grain,
Were beasts, or men as wildly rude,
Or lonely realms of solitude.

MY GRANDFATHER'S HOMESTEAD.

I think at times of youthful pleasure
I knew in early morning years,
When life was innocent of cares—
Each Summer morn a dream of leisure.

When from the roseate eastern sky,
As morning shed its mellow light,
The grateful earth grew bright,
And gladsome hours went slow-paced by.

Each sunrise seemed a new-born joy
At house I used to know of eld;
For all the household that it held
But gave their love a kind employ

In seeking pleasant things to give
Me; book, or print, or fruit, or flower,
Or sleep at noon beneath a bower;
It seemed a pleasure then to live.

But one there was I most remember,
Whose generous hand rich bounty gave,
Whose face to me grew never grave,
Whose heart was May, though head December:

My grandsire, gray but kindly-hearted,
Bereft of health, but not of love;
His eagle-spirit mild as dove,
His gracious lips oft laughter-parted.

Full often did the porch-bench shine
With silver coins in heaps array'd,
And I might count until I made
Mistake, and all, though much, was mine.

And one, my uncle, dwelt there too—
Young manhood showed his spirit high;
For him naught difficult to try,
As ran his course to honor true.

Fond he of hunting hare and duck,
And oft in Autumn mornings went
On sport and game with mind intent;
At eve returning, glad with luck,

When I behind him bore the spoil,
  Well-pleased to have my burden heavy;
  Four fine fat hares, of ducks a bevy,
Nor dreamt of weariness or toil.

My mind was full of pictures green
  And lovely; fields where jumped the hare,
  Startled in fear from grassy lair;
Of purling brooks where ducks were seen;

And the deep hush of distant fields,
  Where stilly nooks of quiet note
  That home and hamlet, still remote,
Mar not the joy great Nature yields.

Oft, spent with sport, to rest I sank
  At foot of oak in forest dell,
  Or on some airy upland swell,
Or on some brooklet's mossy bank,

And mused until the lumbering gun
  Broke silence with sound of thunder;
  Then sprang from dreams of musing wonder,
Hasting to see what had been won.

And thus the blissful day was spent
Amid excitement, rest, and thought;
Rich-robed the pleasures which they brought,
Brimming my heart with calm content.

And then at eve, by candle-light,
My youthful aunt display'd her power
To swiftly speed the passing hour
With book, or game, or story bright.

But these are joys departed long,
Returning not to me again
Save through the mirror of the brain,
When with the melody of song

Memory brings anew to birth
The joys of early days like dreams,
And momentarily redeems
The scenes which once enlivened earth.

The grandsire 's gone, long, long ago,
And now in unrelated hands
Rest homestead and its hunting lands,
For God hath willed it to be so.

The very population 's changed
That then possessed each neighbor place.
Gone are their glory and their grace;
The forests gone through which we ranged.

Gone, old gentility! all gone!
Gone, olden hospitality!
Gone, golden-hued reality,
And all the ancient grandeur—gone!

THE TWO EAGLES.

A BALLAD.

Abroad at morn a cold March day,
Over the frozen mead
I slowly sped my lonely way,
Riding a coal-black steed.

While musing in gaze on scenes around
Two shadow clouds swept by,
As swiftly gliding o'er the ground
As meteors through the sky.

And looking up my eyes found rest
On vision grand and rare;
Two mighty eagles flew abreast,
High in the lofty air.

So wide of wing, so swift of flight,
So stately, great, and strong,
Like swiftest arrows sped aright
They wing'd their course along;

Nor stooped they from their dizzy height
To tread the level land;
They saw the river's rippling light,
Its waters wash the sand,

And they thought of days of elder date
When giant forests stood,
When eagles reigned, in royal state,
The monarchs of the wood.

And it pain'd them now to see no more
Their ancient seats of power,
Nor their forests dark that stood of yore
In that grander, wilder hour.

So they swept on by, those kings of pride,
And mock'd the ways of man;
For their keener sight had now espied,
Where the broken waters ran,

Rows of tents, and lines of men in arms,
Beyond the Beautiful River;
And their thoughts went back to dire alarms,
When Bigfoot's bow and quiver

Brought death in the early days of yore,
In cabin and in field,
Along Ohio's lovely shore
It broke his heart to yield.

And they laughed as they saw the lines of men
And heard their cannon-peal,
How they 'd meet their fate in ambush'd glen
Beneath the Southron's steel;

For they 'd gloated their eyes with slaughter's flood
But only the day before;
They 'd drunk their fill of human blood
Until they could drink no more;

And fondly they hoped that all would swell
The fratricidal strife,
Till not in veins of men would dwell
One drop of human life:

When fields with forests should grow again,
Nature resume her sway,
And lofty hill and lowest plain
Own the eagles kings of day.

VISIONS OF AMBITION.

VISION I.

'T was night; I slept, and visions thronged my brain;
I woke, they fled; I slept, they came again,
And pictured life, the youth, the man, the sage,
The many-checkered paths which led to age.
I viewed awhile this panoramic scene,
Still wondering if its pictures aught might mean,
When accents, sweetly slow, divinely clear,
In gentle whispers stole upon my ear.
I knew an angel surely it must be
That whispered thus so wisely unto me:
"Behold, O youth! thy kindred's cherish'd aim,
How all seem straining in the race for fame!
'T is well to mark the winning wiles of art
Which govern men and sway the human heart.
Yon man of eager look and troubled air,
With dress of modern cut and pen in hair,
How anxiously he turns this way and gazes,
As lost in wildest speculative mazes!

By night his dearest dreams are dreams of gold;
His care by day, what bought and how it sold;
The promised pleasures for his future life,
A palace home, a beauty bought for wife.
He smiles; his soul is glad, his hope is strong,
Nor distant seems the goal, the race not long.
He frowns, for wailing winds are growing loud,
While woe seems pending from the coming cloud;
He sees old ocean's bosom swell with rage,
And feels the ruin wrecking storms presage;
And, sighing deeply, sinks in anguish deep,
A Merchant Prince—the waves his treasures keep."

The angel paused, I saw the vision close,
But in its place another quick arose.
Again the angel whisper'd me the story
Of him who strove through life for martial glory.
"Behold," she said, "the proudly glowing charms
Which crown to-day this valiant son of arms;
How brave the mien, how sternly gleams the eye,
Of him who looks too godlike made to die!
Behold around him lies a camping host;
Its valor and its discipline his boast.
A heavy booming sound is heard afar,
The cannon-thunder of the threaten'd war;

His legions form, and right and left are wheeled
To wait the charge that sweeps the trembling field;
A flash of fire, a cloud of smoke, and lo!
An iron hail is hurled upon the foe.
But on, still onward rolls the steady flood
Till every steel has drunk a foeman's blood;
The carnage, raging, crimsons all the plain;
The soldier, conquered, sleeps among the slain."
She ceased; the battle rolled away its thunder,
And I was left in dreams, and fear, and wonder.
But now I heard the angel cry aloud,
"Behold yon politician sway the crowd!"
I looked, and full in view a platform stood,
Of ample size and shaded by the wood,
While men with various politics imbued
Around it thronged in mighty multitude.
Upon it, stepping to the front, I spied
A wily, wiry man of brazen pride.
With gestures wild, and sadly out of place,
And every feature tortured with grimace,
He taught the crowd its urgent, pressing need
Of men like him, professing just his creed.
At every pause he made there rose a shout,
Approving every sentence mumbled out.

The many passions of the crowd perused,
He flattered these, and those as much abused;
Ere yet he 'd flourished out his epilogue
I knew his words but masked a demagogue.

The scene now changed—a congress-hall became;
There next appear'd a demagogue's poor aim;
Nor country's liberty nor laws were dear,
But money, wine, and gain possess'd his care.
Debate waxed loud and party-spirit high,
Unnerved sat he, and gave his boasts the lie:
His party pressed, of him demanded aid—
It called in vain, and saw its hopes betrayed.
On lightning wings the news like magic spread,
And brought a people's wrath upon his head;
His boasted power sinks in shame away,
Who seeks to triumph only to betray.

The vision closed upon my longing sight;
The angel bade me then this moral write.
Thus, slow and sadly, spoke the angel then:
"Behold in these, the types of other men.
The Merchant strove for gold and worldly gain,
The storm his dreamings crushed and wreck'd his brain;
The Soldier fought for glory and for name,
And with an army vanquished lost his fame;

The Demagogue, too wily to be great,
Forsook his duty in the hall of state.
Why these so blindly rushed to deathless woe,
The vision gleaming there to thee will show."
She ceased, and flew on dewy wings away
Ere night began to blush with dawning day.
I turned, beheld a lettered cloud afloat,
And read this sentence which the angel wrote:
"O, seek not honors merely to possess,
But for the power they confer to bless!
If sweet content for gilded state you sell,
Ambition is your guiding star to hell."

VISION II.

Again, upon a Summer's night as bland,
I had more lovely views of vision-land;
The scenes beheld, so good, so great, sublime,
Were finished models from a former time.
Nor was I left with hamper'd mind alone
To guess the meanings of the pictures shown;
For with the visions came my angel friend,
To every scene a further charm to lend.
And first, there dimly broke upon my sight
A hall that mildly shone with mellow'd light.

Upon that hall an Author graced so well
The angel thus with honey'd tongue did dwell:
"Behold, around in stately pomp repose
The richest cases learning might inclose,
While just above is pictured wit or sage,
Or marble bust of one who ruled his age.
Within those cases, could we peep, we might
Behold a mass of error dashed with right;
A world of prose that at a tiresome rate
Described the civil or the social state.
But mark the Author well, and learn the toil
Of him whose labor burns the midnight oil.
Around are papers heaped with hasty hand,
And books lie open round the writing-stand;
The Author, sitting in the midst, you find
Inditing thoughts with sense and wit refined;
His genius, glowing, spreads upon the page,
And there will live through every future age.
There Truth, by genius clad with modest grace,
Sits crowned supreme, and shows her comely face;
While naked Falsehood shows his evil mien,
And sinks contemn'd, unworthy to be seen.
There Virtue bright with native merit glows,
Enthron'd on high, and smiles upon her foes;

While Vice, ejected from her wanton reign,
Departs the page with all her guilty train.
There Envy with malicious heart displays
The very burden that the fiend betrays.
There Hate with horrid front and face deformed
Ne'er shows herself, or shows herself reformed;
While Love, exulting 'mong such friends to stay,
More sweetly smiles and sheds a brighter ray."

She ceased, and as I gazed I saw the wall
On every side seemed forming fast a hall
Of greater size; the cases fled away,
And in their stead through windows shone the day—
The Author's now became the Speaker's chair.
Before it, ranged in rows of stately care,
Were desks and seats, and just behind, o'erhead,
A wide and spacious gallery was spread.
The gallery, though filled with throng immense,
Was hushed to silence by prolonged suspense.
The senate sits; no vacant chair is there:
The full senate, the well-thronged house, declare
Some question to the country's peace allied
Demands its sagest wisdom to decide.
Within that ancient hall are men whose age
Speaks deep experience and wisdom sage;

But who 'll attempt to brave the darkening storm
Thundering round the tortured country's form.
Now buzzing sounds which fill the stately place
But speak the language of each pallid face;
Louder swells the hum, more fearful seems the woe—
The country's fate, tide-like, doth ebb and flow.
But hush! a statesman 's ris'n, the tumult stilled
As when, to calm the waves, the Savior willed.
In person tall, in attitude commanding,
He awed the house while yet in silence standing;
He spoke, and every sense seems centered in the ear,
One only wish possess'd the house—to hear.
His grand and graceful speech with fervid force
Seemed swelling from a rich exhaustless source;
And as he spoke conviction follow'd fast—
Each argument seemed best he uttered last.
The silence that in muteness held the crowd
Now burst in wild applause, as thunder loud;
Again a calm ensued, and then there rose
An earthquake-shout that deepen'd to the close.
Some laughed in maniac glee and others wept,
As joy or admiration o'er them swept;
They felt they 'd seen the march of angry fate
Turned from the portals of the trembling state.

All honored him whose eloquence sublime
Had saved the country in the troubled time;
And while, in rapture lost, the senate rose,
My second vision hastened to its close.

'T was scarcely gone, when on my vision'd view
A scene more beautiful, more brilliant grew;
The angel whisper'd with a sweeter tongue,
And thus upon the holy vision hung:
"Behold, thou seest there the house of Him
Before whose face the blazing sun is dim.
It is a day of rest, the sabbath day—
Within that house are thousands knelt to pray;
Enter." Now ends the prayer, the organ swells,
And on some holy anthem softly dwells.
'T is hushed, and now a venerable man
Ope'd the good book and mildly thus began:
"My friends, 't is written here that 'God is love,'
And Christians feel and know that God is love."
The good man paused; he smiled a smile of grace,
And heavenly light made beautiful his face.
Again he softly, slowly, sweetly spoke,
Like music from the holy harper's stroke;
And while his tongue with truth sublime was fired,
His godly looks bespoke a man inspired.

Now, glowing with his holy theme's design;
His eloquence, his accents, seemed divine;
He touched his hearer's hearts with earnest force;
He turned the sinner from his evil course;
Brighten'd the Christian's hope with purer ray,
And taught the wicked man to kneel and pray;
Proud wealth before him bow'd his head austere,
And poverty sat clothed with hope sincere.
The sermon ended, all with one accord
Burst into praise and glorified the Lord.

But ere the vision wholly passed away
Once more the angel spoke, and thus did say:
"O mortal man! six visions hast thou seen,
And three degraded were and three serene;
The Merchant, Soldier, and the Politician
Had each a wild, inordinate ambition;
Behold the Author, Statesman, and Divine,
And from their characters sublime form thine."

THE WARNING.

'T was morn in Summer's latest moon,
A joyous party met,
And labor'd through the burning noon
Until the sun had set.

Right gladly beat each heart the while,
As each beheld the day
When blooming beauty's lovely smile
Should hold entrancing sway;

And happy hearts and flying feet
Right merrily would bound,
And to the music's measured beat
Be gliding o'er the ground;

While youth-born love, from morn till eve,
His honey'd tongue would lend
Some hallow'd epithet to weave,
More fondly dear than "friend."

But passed away that day and its dreams,
The next as swiftly flew;
But ere the third's rekindling beams
Had diamonded the dew,

An old familiar name, 't was told,
Had pass'd from earth away,
To be on other rolls enroll'd
Forever and for aye.

No more again will be beheld
The good old grandsire hoary;
No more be heard of days of eld
His half-forgotten story.

From "father-land" across the sea,
In the long-ago-departed,
To lift his lowly lot came he,
Hard-handed, hero-hearted.

And when among the younger sisters
Our fair Kentucky stood,
He gazed upon her forest vistas
And wilderness of wood.

Cast here his lot, and with the state
  Ripening into bloom;
Grew family and fortune great,
  And ripen'd for the tomb;

And while we bury him to-day,
  Sad words are slowly spoken
Of the good old man who 's gone away—
  The link with the past that 's broken.

'T was at the feast Belshazzar made
  The hand along the wall
Such characters of dread array'd
  As did his guests appall.

'T was when the rich man's barns were full,
  And all his hopes were highest,
That God demanded of him his soul—
  "O fool! this night thou diest."

'T was at the ball in Belgium
  That distant cannon-thunder
Awoke the warrior's battle-drum,
  And sever'd hearts asunder:

And now, when happy hearts are high
With hopes of pleasure beating,
There floats a message from the sky,
And death is in its greeting.

SUNSHINE.

Written during a period of dark, cloudy, rainy, snowy weather, unexampled for its duration, March 26, 1867.

Ah! tell me truly, I implore,
If sunshine ever shone
On wall and window-pane and floor
In years that you have known?

Or is it some tradition dim
Of ages long agone,
When earth was trod by Cherubim
In her morning's early dawn?

And was it ever true, as told
Unto us by our sires,
That they were warmed in days of old
By other heat than fires?

That where we now behold the mud
Was dust beneath their feet;
Where now we see the murky flood
Were gardens fair and sweet?

And was it ever truly seen
That o'er us in the sky,
With not a fog or cloud between,
The glowing sun went by?

Or hath it ever been, as now,
That noon was dark as dawn,
And that the cloud that 's on his brow
Was never all withdrawn?

And was it ever, ever thus
That hail and snow and rain,
As each new day came over us,
Were sure to come again?

Our fathers tell us yet, with face
Of candid truthfulness,
That clearest days once blest the race
In their young youthfulness.

But old men often tell what, seeming
To them the plainest truth,
They only know by night in dreaming,
Of days of happy youth.

And so I deem these stories bright
Of weeks of sunshine clear,
Were only visions in the night
Of a vanished atmosphere.

A LOVER'S STORY.

Beyond yon wood, beneath the hill,
Between the river and the rill,
A little spot of green I know,
Where blushing berry-bushes grow.
Above the bushes I did find
A vine about an oak entwined,
And 'most within the oak's wide reach
Are spread a poplar and a beech.
The place beyond this shaded bound
A narrow, winding pathway found,
That curved about with easy grace
To lead me in the lovely place.
Arrived within, a pleasant scene
There lay before me on the green;
For merry children frolicked there,
Nor felt a passion or a care.
Around were roses white and red,
And harebells blooming in their bed;

Just o'er a flock of pinks below
The lilies hung their crests of snow.
The mingled odor of their bloom
From these arose in sweet perfume,
And floated on the balmy breeze
To distant fields and forest-trees.
Attracted by the scent, had come
The wild bee with his busy hum;
From bloom to bloom he flew about
Sucking the golden honey out.
The birds were singing, on the wing,
A love-born melody of Spring:
That garden seemed a spot so fair
I felt a paradise was there.
Beyond this scene, but half revealed,
A cosy cottage stood concealed;
Begirt with vines, adorned by art,
It of the garden seemed a part.
Advancing up the path, I saw
A tiny hand the curtain draw,
And peeping through the glass, I trow,
Its owner saw in me a beau;
For back in haste she drew herself
As quick and slyly as an elf;

But I a glimpse had caught the while,
And owned the magic of her smile.
That smile, that eye, that happy hour,
Had yielded me to Cupid's power.
In vain I strove to quench the flame,
It would not go, it burned the same;
And every charm I sought to smother
But served to show me yet another.
Conquered by love I could not quell,
I hoped she also felt the spell;
I entered then, and oh! how fair
An angel I discovered there!
With waving curls of golden hue,
And liquid eyes of deepest blue,
Her graceful form and modest mien
Eclipsed all fairies and their queen.
Impelled by love I could not cover,
I straight confess'd myself her lover,
And down before her beauty knelt
To tell her all the love I felt.
Surprised, confused, she fled from me,
Nor deigned an answer to my plea;
Then I, with dismal, heavy heart,
Arose in sorrow to depart.

I reached the door with palsied will,
And halting there, awhile stood still.
The day was fading fast away—
My hope had faded like the day;
Night, gloomy night, had 'most begun,
For in the west there shone no sun;
Dark thoughts were in my burning brain,
And woe with ruin led their train.
While thus, in anguish lost, I staid,
A gentle hand was on me laid;
I felt a thrill, a thrill of flame
Quiver through and recreate my frame;
I turned and felt that untold bliss
That lingers in a lover's kiss.
Is this good reason, lover state,
That at the close of evening late,
I follow up the winding way
That through the lovely garden lay?

INSCRIPTION FOR A BIBLE.

Between these covers doth abide
Wisdom worth all the world beside.

When darkness blots the sun from sight,
Within it look and find the Light.

If trouble come and earth seem drear,
Thou shalt find comfort ever here.

Be it thy stay and constant friend,
And it shall bless thee in the end.

INDIAN SUMMER.

The merry month of May,
Amid its rosy sway,
Hath, dream-like, fled away;

And birds that sang in June
Have sung their latest tune
'Neath her shade-embowered noon.

No sun-embrowned July
Now heaves his sultry sigh
When zephyr floateth by.

Long August's lingering sun,
With all his toiling done,
Hath mellow ripeness won;

And Autumn's ruby wine
Doth in our goblets shine,
A goodly gift divine.

October's golden smiles,
Through many leafy miles,
Have lit the forest-aisles;

And the Indian Summer's haze,
Through many dreamy days,
Hath dimmed the golden rays;

And to gladden our eyes
Hath brought their brilliant dyes
From oriental skies.

The sleepy air is still
On river, plain, and hill—
No gentle breeze hath will

To break the gorgeous spell,
By poets loved so well,
That o'er the land doth dwell.

SONNETS.

THE SONNET.

The sonnet's office, let the poet learn,
Is not for common use; but deftly wrought
To carry true the heavy-freighted thought:
And minds well tutor'd to discern
The meaning hidden in its quaintest turn,
Will own the pleasure greatest when is brought
From far the gorgeous imagery, enwrought,
Which gilds the glowing theme with words that burn.
Its sense a sumptuous splendor should enshrine,
Like summer's golden sun at eve's decline,
And thought burst beaming from its lucent marge;
Its training true, like gun of Sumter's fort,
Which held so long the sea-beleaguer'd port,
Send truth, like round-shot, singing to the targe.

SORROW AND SONG.

'T is sorrow bringeth forth the mightiest songs
For it is want of rest which giveth birth
To scenes more glad than those beheld on earth.
The pent-up mind doth soar in thought, and longs
To taste that joyful rapture which belongs
To spheres beyond; and when the soul hath dearth
Of earthly bliss, it echoeth the mirth
Of some diviner earth's divinest songs.
Nor deem it strange it should be so. Alas!
How fleeting are delights beneath these skies!
None constant here remain, but all do pass—
One hour our joy doth live, the next it dies.
We are not born for earth, and should not be
Contented here, who live eternally.

PARTING.

There is a sorrow felt within the heart,
When words are feeble, and fail to explain
The dreadful anguish, burdensome with pain,
At times when we are forced forever to part
From those we loved in early years; when art
Nor artifice were used to get for gain
An open access to the youthful brain.
But when its portals widely swung apart
To welcome native greatness of the mind,
Nor grudged a part of love, but gave the whole,
A triune wreath, whose loveliness entwined
The mind, the body, and immortal soul;
'T is then that parting comes, like death, to sever
The hearts of friends who thought them linked forever

ROBERT E. LEE.

"Duty is the sublimest word in our language."—ROBERT E. LEE.

The earth holds not on any storied page
A nobler thought than this; and thou, great Lee,
Alone for it hadst immortality!
But never on her transient, shifting stage
Went by, with splendor high, in any age,
A statelier champion of liberty.
All hearts do bow with homage deep to thee,
As to a soul endow'd with wisdom sage.
The soldier's law is duty! Thou, peerless one
As God's own sunshine ever shone upon;
Great, with a manly meekness so sublime
That thou exalted men, and kept them so.
Their deeds with thine shall teach the after-time,
And down the marching ages grandly go.

NATURE'S SABBATHS.

From the clear zenith, far as sight may flee,
Within the whole blue cup of lucent sky,
No fleck of cloud or cloudlet floateth high;
And lone, as ship upon a sailless sea,
The sun hath sped the long day listlessly;
The soundless air, so still and pure and dry,
No motion owns, save whirlwinds flitting by,
Which to the storm-born blasts but babies be.
Such are the days we Nature's Sabbaths deem,
When earth is dear as some delicious dream,
Picturing fair a clime and country sweet,
Lapsed into calms of Summer's full delight,
Where all angelic harmonies do meet
In men and women, beautiful and bright.

MORNING IN JULY.

How sweet and balmy breathes the air in days
When calm and clear the earth and sky appear,
And men have pass'd the toilsome harvest care!
When stands in serried ranks the tasseled maize,
Whose dewy pearls glint back the morning rays;
The distant trains resound like thunder near,
So unconvulsed the limpid atmosphere;
E'en earth's faint whispers clearly it conveys.
The happy birds are everywhere heard with glee
While joyous matins they so blithely sing,
With self-taught, wild, and wondrous minstrelsy,
Making the blissful air with music ring.
Save these, a slumbrous silence reigns supreme,
Like morning sleeping in a land of dream.

NOON IN JULY.

'T is noon of day, and noon of Summer sweet,
And still the air and earth full tranquil rest,
Though clouds are rising white in the blue west.
The level lake doth cloud and sky repeat;
The fields are glowing with the fervent heat;
While, busy to fulfill their queen's behest,
The bees a-wing pursue with zeal their quest;
The herds to shades repair on weary feet,
For sun-worn cattle fain at rest would be;
The birds of morn but chirp in briefest note;
Lazily caws the crow on distant tree;
And morning seems to man an age remote:
His outworn limbs relax, his spirits tire,
Succumbent to the regnant rule of fire.

MOSES.

Never was man so grand as he!—the Meek.
King of the prophets; lord of Israel's race,
Who spoke to God as friends do, face to face;
With whose great power clad, made strong the weak,
And with a crowd of slaves outshone the Greek
That triumph'd till earth held no fortress'd place
Unyielding to his will. But God's own grace
Bestow'd the strength his mighty wrath to wreak.
Through him, as through angelic potentate,
The tribes submitted to the rule of God;
His words were weighty with substantial fate,
And sealed his judgments were beyond debate;
E'en occult forces felt his lifted rod
Supreme. His meek obedience made him great.

WORDSWORTH.

Hail, subtlest poet of great England's isle!
Whose tuneful touch in common things awoke
Such sweetness and such music as ne'er broke
Their thralldom in dead wood and stone to smile
On man in new creations; which, the while
Thou harpéd with thy wonder-waking stroke,
Rose like swart genii from out the smoke,
To build thy fame, like some enormous pile,
Gorgeous and vast, for future ages meant.
Like it, thy name will proudly stand for aye,
And dull mankind spell out thy high intent;
While glaring fames, but false ones, fade away,
And thine, as erst great Bacon's, bide its time,
To grow with age more stately and sublime.

MILTON.

Since those primeval years when prophets spoke
By Him inspired who made and rules the whole,
No man hath shown profounder depth of soul,
And with a nobler tongue that silence broke
Which else had lain for ages like a yoke
Upon the worlds. Nor didst thou, like a mole,
Approach to hell by creeping through a hole,
As Dante did; but face to face thou spoke
To God for guidance, and essayed to go
As to Goliath David went, when he,
Saul's armor lying idle in his tent,
Went clad more stoutly with sublime intent.
Thou strode a god with ample step and free,
Thus heaven beheld, and told thy vision so.

TO GEN. BUSHROD R. JOHNSON, C. S. A.

There's many a starrier name, "Old Bush," than thine
Gone clamor'd down the corridors of fame;
But thine hath lofty port and stately frame,
And doth with many a memory entwine
Of days when morning life was ruby wine.
Cadets, who hated thee, beheld the flame
Thy valor kindled, glorify thy name,
And recognized nobility divine.
Then first they felt that in thy rigid rule
Unkindness was by thee nor meant nor thought,
But meet such discipline for battle's school;
For oft-times such was gold which triumph bought.
The South has had some soaring genius brighter,
But never truer soldier, steadier fighter.

SHAKESPEARE.

Thou peerless prince of bright imagination,
Loftiest soarer in the skies of song,
Whose attributes to no one age belong;
Whose mighty heart's deep pulsation
Finds echo still in hearts of every nation!
Time hears thy softest cadence dance along—
Time hears thy bugle-notes of thought so strong
Roll down the ages with reverberation,
Disclosing man unto himself so true,
That each doth wonder at thy magic pen
As each his mirror'd self beholds in you;
Thou conversant with all the acts of men,
Whose characters in thee as plain appear
As do the stars in winter midnights clear.

TO G. W. GRIFFIN,

ON RETURNING "A WOMAN'S POEMS," BY MRS. S. M. B. PIATT.

You asked, when loaning me the little book,
I 'd mark the poems which most to me made show;
Those terse with thought, and those of tuneful flow;
In what discerning, dim or bright, in nook
Or corner, or at large display'd, they took
The color genius wears, with crest aglow,
Full far above the common crowd below.
But hear my answer, friend; lift eyes and look!
In yonder sky are evening clouds reposing,
To my eyes and to yours sublimely grand;
But mine are these, and yours are those transposing
To rivers wide and lakes of golden strand;
Nor I to you or you to me disclosing
Those pictures only each may understand.

THE CLOUDS.

As I behold yon measureless and deep
  Abysmal sky, and view the pictures there,
  Which now appear as infinitely rare,
As they disclose themselves, as when in sleep
Some gorgeous vision on the mind doth creep;
  I do remember once in evening air
  A cloud that lay immense, sublimely fair;
Its size stupendous showed; in curving sweep
  Its cumulous involvements, height on height,
Magnificently rose in lofty mountains,
  Between which vales and vistas stole from sight,
Enshrouding wondrous lands and fairy fountains,
  Whose splendors yet among my memories stand
  Grander than snow-crowned Alps in Switzerland.

TO POESY.

Sweet Poesy! divinest of the arts
  Which man has framed to soothe his restless soul,
  When genius weds with thee and takes control,
Thou by most potent spells doth bind all hearts;
And when thou fliest far thy shining darts,
  Be their alighting near to either pole,
  There liveth not so cold and dense a soul
But thou to it some heart-warm heat imparts,
  Kindling therein some smothered sense of beauty,
Awakening mind and heart to emulate
  The grand achievements of his fellow-men,
  And cause him wish to see arise again
The trenchant thoughts and deeds which make men great,
  And arise their souls to more ennobling duty.

TO ALFRED TENNYSON.

Some Seraph surely dropped his pen to thee,
Thou last result of culture most refined,
Thou poet-laureate of all mankind!
Whose morning's promise, strangely fair and free,
Thy splendid age fulfills triumphantly.
Thou art the perfect fruit of England's mind,
Whose wreath of song doth all her ages bind
For full transmittal to eternity.
Thy youthful intellect in eastern clime
Did dwell, enraptur'd with the morning-world,
But daily with the sun in course sublime
Thy crimson banners were to air unfurl'd
Still further westward, till at home you came,
And wrought your temple of immortal fame.

CLOVER HILL.

I.

High on a mound thy ample mansion stands,
Fronting the south, with grassy lawns around,
Whose every foot of earth is holy ground;
Thy every door a lovely view commands;
On one side plains, on others rolling lands:
Vast, in a forest that thy fields surround,
Gigantic trees of lofty height abound,
Whose primal shadows fell on Indian bands.
I 've watched thy varied beauties grow from less
To greater size, and marked with new surprise
Thy spreading fields enlarge thy scope of skies,
Displaying more thy native nobleness,
Till now the sun, his planets all attendant,
Walks thy wide heavens majestic and resplendent.

CLOVER HILL.

II.

Home of my birth and of my after years,
Dear Clover Hill, I love thee like some star
Is loved by mariners in seas afar;
Home of my heart, my hopes, my joys and fears,
Each year to me thy loveliness endears;
For 'neath thy roof-tree or a-near thy walls
(Since deaf to Drennon's drum and bugle calls)
Story and song have fill'd my waiting ears.
My wife, my children, friends, have shed fresh grace
Upon the early glories of thy face,
Enwreathing all anew the olden joy;
That gentle gladness ever mirthful springing,
And to my open heart its music singing,
While earth's full happy home seem'd heaven to th' boy.

UNKNOWN.

'T is sad how little we know and are known
To and of those who know us truest, best!
Then how can we be known to all the rest
Who dwell beyond our closely-bounded zone?
And never will we come to all our own
Till Time has sped his last uneasy quest
Down the wide portals of the flaming west,
And we are summon'd to the great white throne.
Then shall we know as we are known at last;
The sun not plainer in the sky be seen,
Without a vapor or a cloud between;
But then, forsooth, the world be slidden past.
Alas! alas! shall we not sound till then
The minds and souls and hearts profound of men?

EXPRESSION.

The mind stands heavy-burden'd with great thought,
But all its richness neither tongue nor pen
Can compass or transmit to other men;
And it must still suffice them to be taught
To see within themselves the thoughts enwrought
Which glow within the thinker's mind and soul,
But whose expression, slipped beyond control,
Elusive glides, too subtle to be caught.
Hence men make symbols tell their unwrit tale;
For these a wide significance express,
And give suggestion by their variedness,
When strongest words, though chosen well, shall fail.
Thus, though precision, tongue, or pen betrays,
By symbols deft the mind its thought conveys.

LABOR.

I.

So fashion'd are we men, the denisons
  Of earth, that satisfaction most appears
  When joy upriseth through affliction's tears;
And labor grants more ample benizons
Unto her faithful and triumphant sons
  Than slothful men receive; or to him fares
  Who sits at ease and idle, free from cares,
And does not aught accomplish 'tween the suns.
  What nobler than to feel and understand
  That vast achievement waits the winning hand!
To clear the waste, subdue the wilderness,
  And make a garden bloom where once was fen;
Where want abode create plenteousness,
  And render earth habitable for men.

ACHIEVEMENT.

II.

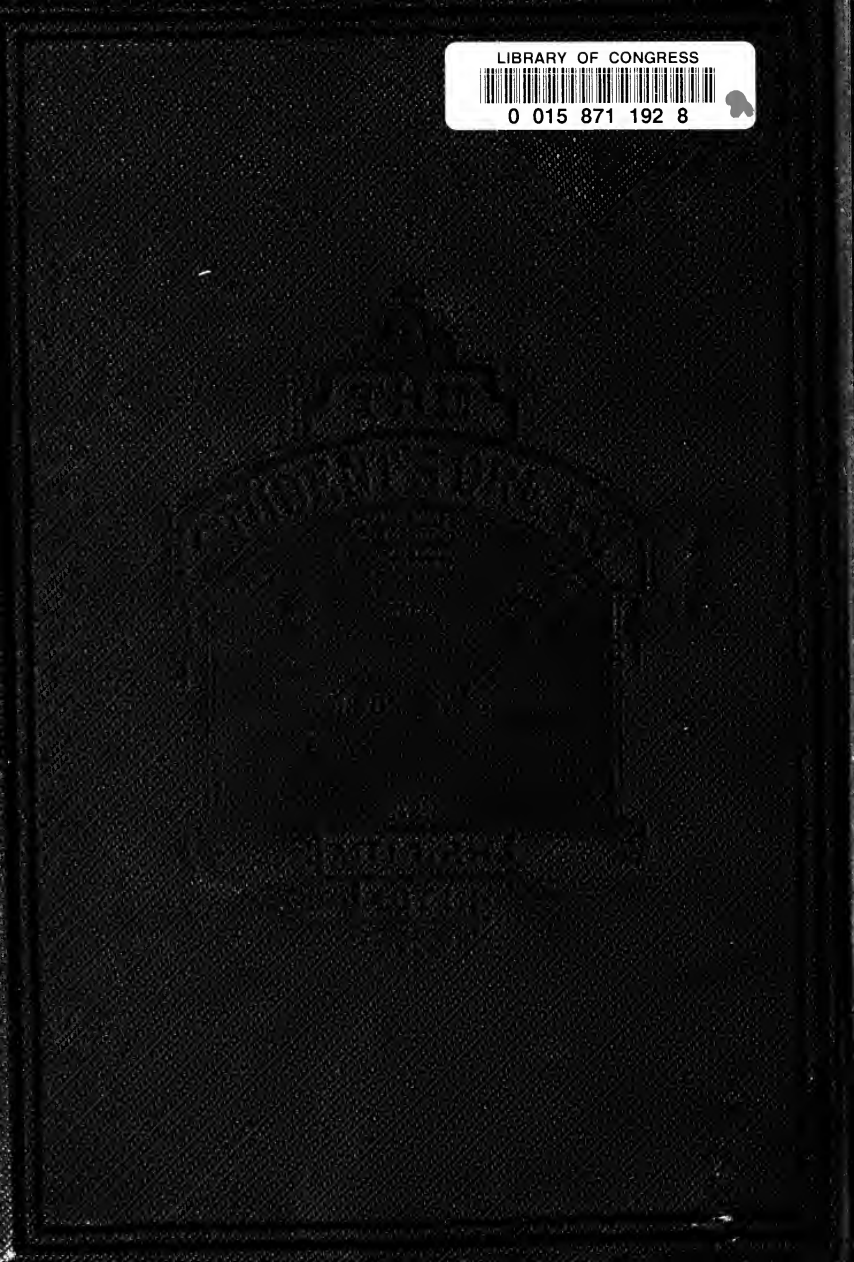
E'en God his six day's work did satisfy;
  Whose infinite and omniscient deeds absorb
  The hosts of heaven in praise, as orb on orb,
Throughout the dim infinitudes of sky,
Arise responsive to his quickening eye;
  And whose Almighty heart-beats throb
  To e'en the faintest erring human's sob,
Who bows his humbled soul repentantly.
  If God did joyful cry at his work's close
That it was good, and its achievement sweet,
  Why not we, who from labor seek repose,
Enjoy results from source so pure and meet,
  And own that only he its gladness knows
Whose labor done, its due rewardings greet?

REST

III.

How rich a crown doth rest bestow on him
Whom worthy acts have worn! 'T is like the dews
Whose gentle fall the parchéd grass renews;
'T is like a cup from whose o'erflowing brim
Might quaff enjoying heaven's high cherubim.
It cometh like the bringer of good news
To beaten soldiers and storm-wreck'd crews,
And sweetens toil as the soul a hymn.
It cometh truly only unto those
Who earn its meed by steady hard-wrought blows.
The sluggard never feels its balmy sweetness;
The man of wealth, or him of noble birth,
Ne'er, or but seldom, tastes its full completeness;
'T is only labor's children know its worth.

TRUE GREATNESS.

But he alone is great whose mind is great,
And greatly dwells conjoin'd with mighty soul;
Whose heart abounds in love, and in control
Works out the problems that to him relate,
Whether secluded deep, or high in state;
Who from the center sees the utmost whole,
And travels boldly to the distant goal,
Nor turns regardful of reproach or hate;
But uses powers loan'd him from above,
For purposes whose aim and end is love.
All men to him as younger brothers are;
'T is he directs, designs, and plans, and leads,
With wisdom's high-born thoughts and godlike deeds,
And beams above them like the Eastern Star.

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